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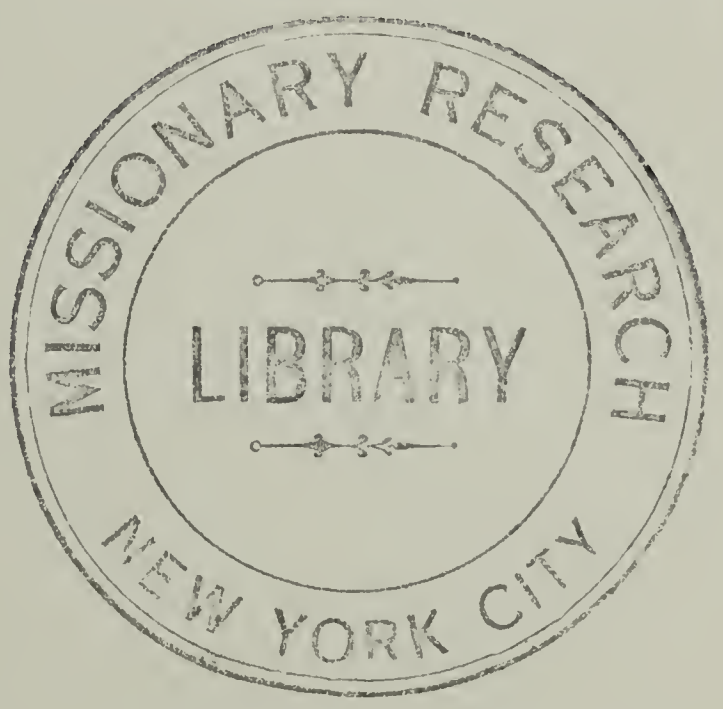
Christian World Planning

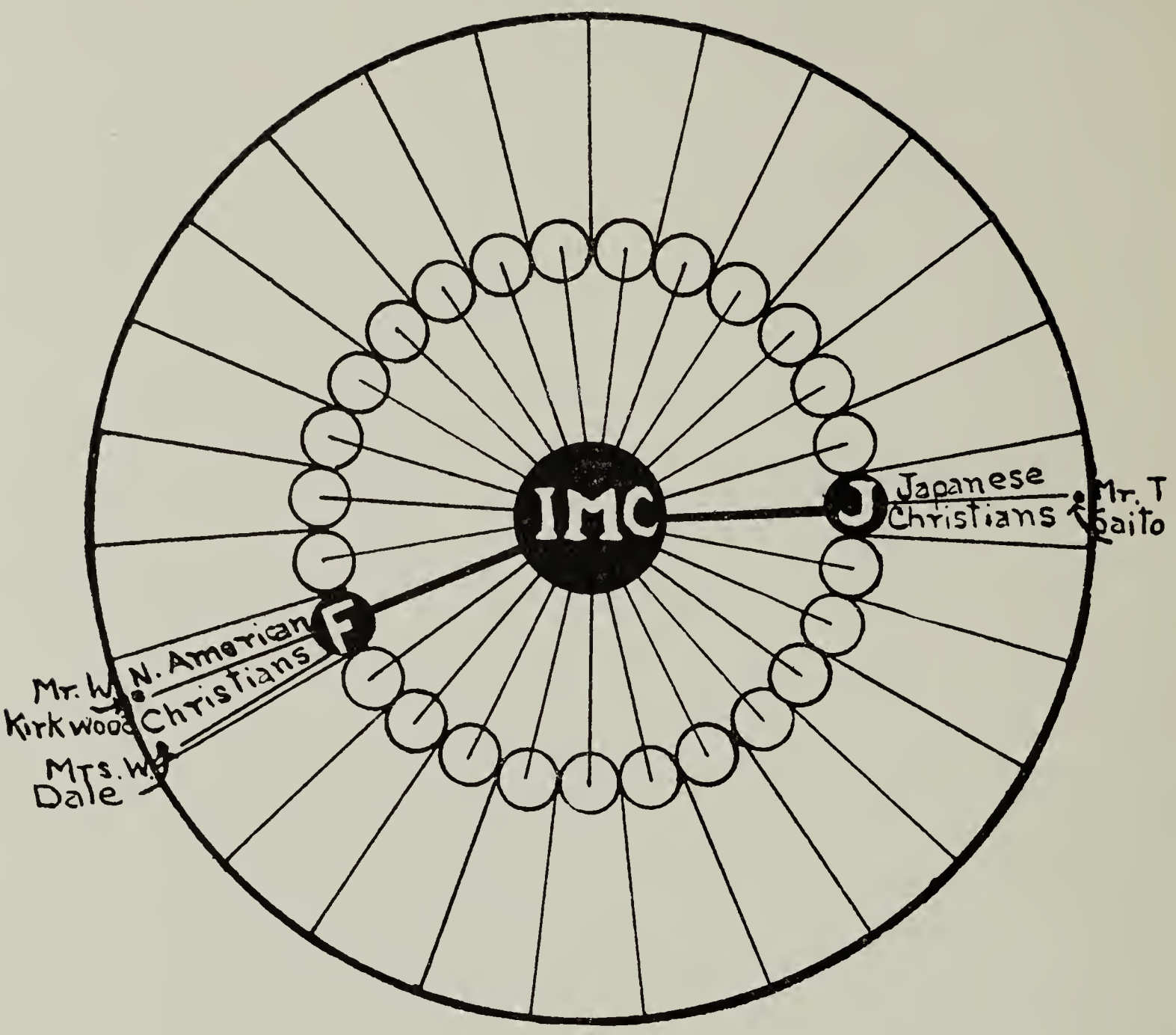
How Can

Mr. Kirkwood, Mrs. Dale and Mr. Saito Work Together to Build the World Church of Christ?



An Interpretation
of the
Foreign Missions Conference
of North America

1935



F = Foreign Missions Conference of North America

J = National Christian Council of Japan

I.M.C. = International Missionary Council

The Problem

MR. WALTER B. KIRKWOOD is a Methodist layman in Huntington, Indiana. Mrs. William Dale is a Baptist in Montreal, Canada. Mr. Takashi Saito is a Presbyterian layman in Sendai, Japan. They are disciples of the same Christ. They are members of the same Church Universal, in which also are joined in spiritual fellowship six hundred and fifty million other Christians throughout the world.

But this is to them a purely spiritual fact. They can make it seem real only by the use of their imaginations. They are continually made to realize their separation by distance and by national barriers. As Protestants they lack such organic unity as the Roman and Greek churches afford. Is there, then, any symbol which can make their spiritual unity objective and comprehensible? Is there any kind of organization which, avoiding the rigidity of the Catholic churches, will yet enable Mr. Kirkwood, Mrs. Dale, and Mr. Saito cooperatively to apply their spiritual resources to the defeat of human evil? For example, could they by any means join to prevent a war between Japan and the United States? Or to forbid injustice to Chinese coolies either at the hands of an American oil company or a Japanese cotton factory.

The Answer

YES. The International Missionary Council and its constituent councils form such a symbol and such an organization. They relate Mr. Kirkwood, Mrs. Dale and Mr. Saito as shown in the diagram. Mr. Saito and his fellow Japanese Christians of all Protestant denominations have created **"J"**, the Japanese Christian Council. This council is not an authority over them; it is their creation and expresses their united Christian thought, conscience and will. Exactly in the same way Mr. Kirkwood, Mrs. Dale, and their fellow Christians of all Protestant denominations have created **"F"**, the Foreign Missions Conference of North America. **"J"**, **"F"**, and twenty-four similar councils in as many other countries or areas have created the International Missionary Council. It expresses their united thought, conscience and will, but it does more than that. It acts as a central exchange for every Protestant Christian in the world. Through

it they may communicate their varying thoughts, consciences and wills to one another and even unite to bring pressure upon the governments and societies of the human race.

The following pages tell how the International Missionary Council and its American element, the Foreign Missions Conference, work and what specific things they do in making objective and effectual the Protestant Christian fellowship throughout the world.

Keeping the Church World Conscious

IT is not only distance that keeps Mr. Kirkwood, Mrs. Dale, and Mr. Saito out of touch with each other. Each is shut in and pressed upon by mortgages, shrinking budgets, unemployment, and the whole obsessing din of the near and visible. The very news they read about each other is colored by the politics of their favorite newspapers. Because they belong to different denominations, much even of their Christian reading is in parallel lines that never cross.

For Mr. Kirkwood and Mrs. Dale it is the Foreign Missions Conference that tries to correct this crippled view of life. In 1933, for example, the Stanley Jones conferences reached nearly a million people, across all dividing lines. "Christian World Facts" silently does the same for ministers in the form of an annual digest. Two bulletins last year clarified again the meaning and purposes of evangelism and described that part of foreign missions which is expressly concerned with "making Christ known." "The World of Missions" is the title of the weekly radio program of the Conference. Through such instruments the Conference keeps the American Church conscious that it is a sector of the World Church.

Translating Faith Into Action

BUT Mr. Kirkwood, Mrs. Dale, and Mr. Saito wish to do much more than keep in touch with each other or even with the news of the World Church. They wish to help that Church in every country to translate its faith into action. But they lack knowledge, time and the physical possibility of doing this in person. They therefore delegate their interest. In one direction they project it through the network of the International Missionary Council and its twenty-six

constituent elements to a long line of board secretaries, missionaries, teachers, preachers and finally the fellowship of rank-and-file Christians in every country. In another direction they project their interest, through that same network, to research men and women quietly studying the "problem spots" of the human race. Let us now follow where these two lines of delegated interest lead.

THE CROSSROADS OF CHRISTIAN PLANNING

Once a year the Foreign Missions Conference brings together the executives of seventy foreign mission boards of the United States and Canada. They discuss searchingly their problems and policies, compare and contrast their strategies, find common ground, detect overlapping, and go back to their offices to modify their own board's plans in the light of wider experience. Each of the twenty-five other councils over the world does the same; in each country or area missionaries and nationals of all denominations thus sit down together, and in some of them, like the Philippines, achieve a degree of cooperation amounting almost to a united Protestant Church.

Against the grand backdrop of the whole world, the International Missionary Council arranges an exactly similar procedure once in two or three years. Two hundred and fifty Christian leaders from every country and nearly every communion in the world met at Jerusalem in 1928, and smaller numbers in the summers of 1929 and 1932 at Williamstown, Massachusetts, and Herrnhut, Germany. Dr. John R. Mott, the chairman of the Council, and in a lesser degree the three secretaries in London and New York, move like shuttles between the Christian communities of the world, coordinating, weaving them into a real, even though unorganized, Church Universal.

A DAY OF FORTY HOURS

In the councils and conferences just named not only Mrs. Dale but Mrs. Kirkwood and Mrs. Saito are represented. Accordingly there is a Committee on Women's Work to serve as their special tool. One of its achievements each Lenten season is to create a day of forty hours! On the World Day of Prayer Christian women pray, and a day is lengthened to forty hours as in glorious procession they join this service round the world. The program is translated and made available to Christian women everywhere—350,000 copies on this

continent alone. The offerings amount to $20,000—$5,000 for Christian literature abroad, $5,000 for the seven union colleges for women in the Orient, and $10,000 for two home mission projects.

But this committee does more continuous work than that. It fosters the study of international relations among the church women of America. It has arranged for tours of American cities by such outstanding ambassadors as Miss Michi Kawai of Japan and Dr. Wu Yi-fang of Ginling College, China, and will arrange for similar tours in the future. On the field it tries to help the missionaries with certain of their special problems and with the education of their children in America.

THE WELDED EDGES

Within a World Church white residents of non-white countries hold a unique place. They are all missionaries—for something—and by no means always for the Kingdom of Christ. Like the appointed missionaries of the church they are projecting points along the edges of civilizations about to be welded. They may become either the strongest points of the union or the most resistant obstacles to the welding. Anglo-American churches, scattered throughout the port cities of the non-white world, try to make them points of union. The Foreign Missions Conference, as one of its minor but crucial pieces of cooperative work, aids these churches to secure the best pastoral leadership.

CHRIST AND CAESAR

Amid the ruins of the World War German foreign missions would naturally have been destroyed—one of a thousand sacred and supra-natural things to be trodden under foot in that wolfish struggle. They were not destroyed, and the instrument of their safety was a secretary of the International Missionary Council. Through his service a clause was written into the Treaty of Versailles, establishing trusteeships for the German missions. All of those in British mandates have now been fully restored to the German churches.

Every year similar, if less dramatic, problems have to be met. With nationalism a growing faith, the Christian Church stands daily in the shadow of conflict with some government or between governments. Two committees of the Council follow with unflagging attention the shifting movements of this shadow. They have lately had prepared a study of religious

liberty in the countries of the Near East. They are now arranging for an American college course on the history and principles of religious liberty and for one or more books which may serve as resources for it.

In short, the Council and its constituent bodies in each country try to think out for the whole Christian fellowship what their attitude should be toward governmental restrictions, and to modify or even oppose such restrictions when that is judged to be the wise and Christian course.

THE NURSERY OF A NEW WORLD

Africa is the latest born of continents and the most neglected by the Christian Church. There until very recently it has been most scattered and least conscious of its unity. But the industrial adventures of the white race have not neglected it. So it has become the nursery of the coming world. Every hope, faith, pain, conflict, that men are to inherit in the next century is there in the raw. That is why the Foreign Missions Conference has a special committee on Africa. Take three cases of its work in the recent past.

Mr. J. Merle Davis* and a commission were invited to study the African's situation as a new and unadjusted factor in industry. How can he be a Christian, or even a man at peace with himself, uprooted as he is from his tribal life and thrown into the chaos of the barracks? The study has been published under the title of "Modern Industry and the African." It is an invaluable source book and handbook for every Africa missionary in an industrial area.

Miss Margaret Wrong is undertaking the amazing task of teaching a continent to read. And to read well. She fills requests from the field for every kind of book from arithmetics to Bible lessons. Notable and most influential is a village magazine called "Listen—News From Far and Near." Up to the present time it has been financed by the Committee on Christian Literature for Women and Children in Mission Lands. It has now reached a circulation of 4,500 copies which nearly pays its way.

A few years ago the London secretaries of the International Council produced a book called "The Remaking of Man in Africa." It was the result of the long-continued, thoughtful

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* Mr. Davis is director of the Department of Social and Industrial Research and Counsel. See page 8.

discussions of these secretaries with a group of board secretaries, missionaries, and British and American educators, and it comprises a masterly handbook of Christian education with the most careful adaptation to African nature and cultures.

This is the type of help the World Church must give Africa for many years to come.

The Sinews of Peace

COMMISSIONS, especially when sent to mission fields, have been severely censured as intrusive and superfluous. But it is only to impatient minds that they seem so. Every organization from a mining company to a public school is built up on the basis of the patient obscure work of its research staff. It cannot be otherwise with the building of the most important of all structures, the Christian Church throughout the world.

Therefore, one of the highest functions of the Foreign Missions Conference is to participate in studies. Notable ones in the past come quickly to mind. The educational policies proposed by the Phelps-Stokes Commission (to East, West and South Africa) were adopted almost as a whole by the British "White Paper" for all British colonies. The Lindsay Commission has led to the present united financing of the India colleges and will lead sooner or later to united college planning in India. The Burton Commission in China is resulting in similar coordination there. The commission under Dr. Kenyon L. Butterfield, which studied rural life in five countries over a period of two years, has laid the foundation for a comprehensive reconstruction of rural life in Asia.

A permanent tool of study set up by the International Council is the Department of Social and Industrial Research and Counsel in London. The Department's first commission—on African industry—has already been mentioned. It is now organizing its second, to search for and develop moving pictures which will at once preserve the best of the African heritage and introduce the African with the highest degree of spiritual sanity to the disturbing life of the outside world.

A continuous stream of such commissions must be created, as and where needed. They must study, and put at the disposal of Christian leaders, the **facts** about human nature

and human society with which alone the Kingdom of Christ can be built.

There are, in fact, several highly specialized areas in which research is the chief though not the only work of the Conference and of the International Council.

CHRISTIANS AND JEWS

One of these is the Christian approach to the Jews. A committee for this area is making steady progress. Without compromise or sacrifice of basic essentials it has multiplied intimate contacts with Jews, from the underprivileged ones of Eastern Europe to university students and spiritual leaders in this country. Among university and theological students, clergy and laymen, education about and the promotion of interest in Jewry is going on. An encouraging result is the number of young men and women entering this field as a life work.

THE ROOT OF LIFE

While industry has changed the face of the world and the nature of society, the majority of the human race are still farmers and rural life is still the root of all life. The growth of the World Church in rural life is the concern of a committee representing seventeen American mission boards. They draw on the Agricultural Missions Foundation for knowledge of experiments abroad and transmit this knowledge to their boards and their missionaries.

DOCTORS AGREE

In an exactly similar way a medical committee unites a number of the American boards in two functions: in the joint examination of candidates and furloughed missionaries; and in united attention to the highest possible improvement of medical missionary practice everywhere.

LEADERS OF THE YOUNGER CHURCHES

In the end of the day the fragile new churches in Asia and Africa will live or die according to the spiritual depth of their leaders. No form of research and recommendation, therefore, could be more necessary than that which bears upon the training of the ministry in the younger churches. A conference on this subject in 1934 was prepared for by exceptionally careful preliminary study and brought together twenty-four presidents and professors of theological seminaries,

twenty missionaries on furlough, and twenty secretaries of mission boards. The report, written by Mr. Basil Mathews and bearing the significant title "Forerunners of a New Age," has been widely circulated in mission fields. But the members of this conference, however distinguished, were all Americans. The next conference, to be held in the late summer of this year, will include non-Americans. Two preliminary studies are already under way. One of them is taking the unexpected course of surveying the functions of the religious leaders and the methods of propagation in the non-Christian religions.

FIFTY-FIVE THOUSAND BOOKS

It is obvious that such a program of research must be grounded deep in a library; and in a good one. To exactly this end Mr. Charles H. Fahs has been for twenty years developing the Missionary Research Library with the minute and scholarly care of the university tradition. He has assembled more than fifty-five thousand books. Even more priceless to the board secretaries, authors, students and missionaries on furlough who sit daily at his tables are the scores of rare periodicals, culled from remote corners of the Christian world. Though the partial support of this library is found elsewhere, it is imperative that this be supplemented by the Conference.

Futures

So much, then, for what the Conference and the Council are doing. But it is not enough.

NEGLECTED COLLEGE GENERATION

No comprehensive world Christian education is now being done in American colleges. Many of the boards have been obliged to dispense with their candidate secretaries. The denominational secretaries for the most part meet students submerged in non-student groups. The Student Volunteer Movement has dropped its educational department. The Christian Associations have had no national resource department or supervision in this field for four years. Yet it is imperative to convey to this college generation the intimate sense of belonging to the World Christian Community; to show them that missions, which many of them despise as sentimental nonsense, are a concerted attempt to upbuild that community amid the cross-fires of racial, industrial and political struggle.

MISSIONARIES OF THE FIRST RANK

Then a few students must be selected and trained to be the builders. The fewer they must be, the more scrupulously they must be chosen and the more urgently they must have our richest help in preparing for the still uncharted missionary enterprise of the future. Those who are to declare the Word under conditions we can today but faintly visualize will need a type of training far different from today's conventional type. The Conference has authorized an institute to study these matters—when money shall be found.

SUNK WITHOUT TRACE?

In Christian schools tens of thousands of brown, yellow and black boys and girls learn to read each year. But eighty percent of them after leaving school lapse back into illiteracy! Is the money and strength expended on their training gone? Sunk without trace? The reason: no literature suitable for them to read. Something is wrong with our follow-through. Committees on the fields all too meagerly financed. A little tract here, a small translation there. Nothing less than a grand strategy of Christian literary production, like Miss Margaret Wrong's for Africa, will do.

The Spiritual Core

IT might be possible to infer from this description of the network through which the Kirkwoods, the Dales, and the Saitos realize their Christian unity in spite of distance, principalities and powers, and the weakness of the human imagination, that it is a gigantic sort of executive machine. That would be as far as possible from the truth. It is rather a nervous system carrying the delicate admonitions of the Spirit. It is a network of pipes carrying the Water of Life. For what the Kirkwoods and Dales and Saitos need, so much that all the rest of life is only a hollow shell without it, is the Life of the Spirit which is in Christ. To convey this round and round the world in a living stream to every human soul is the one end of all the organization that has been described in these pages.

The officers of the Foreign Missions Conference express their appreciation to Mr. Raymond P. Currier for his assistance in the formulation of this statement.

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